IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Original) An optical fiber holder comprising: a tubular member for fitting over an optical fiber bundle comprising a bundle of plural optical fibers to prevent the optical fibers from separating from each other; and a pressing structure for exerting a pressing force on the optical fiber bundle in a direction perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the optical fiber bundle to press the optical fiber bundle against an inner periphery of the tubular member.

2. (Original) The optical fiber holder in accordance with claim 1, wherein the pressing structure comprises an aperture extending through a peripheral wall of the tubular member from an outer periphery of the tubular member to the inner periphery of the tubular member, and a pressing member for exerting the pressing force on the optical fiber bundle through the aperture.

3. (Original) The optical fiber holder in accordance with claim 1, wherein the pressing structure is spaced a predetermined distance apart from a leading edge of the optical fiber bundle in the longitudinal direction.

4. (Original) The optical fiber holder in accordance with claim 1, wherein the pressing structure is located inwardly of the outer periphery of the tubular member.

5. (Original) The optical fiber holder in accordance with claim 1, wherein the inner periphery of the tubular member comprises a holding portion having a diameter capable of holding the optical fiber bundle relatively tightly, and a larger-diameter portion located closer to a leading edge of the optical fiber bundle than the holding portion and having a larger diameter

than the holding portion, the larger-diameter portion being configured to fit around a fused leading end portion of the optical fiber bundle inserted through the tubular member.

6. (Original) An optical fiber holder comprising a tubular member for fitting over an optical fiber bundle comprising a bundle of plural optical fibers to prevent the optical fibers from separating from each other, the tubular member defining an aperture extending through a peripheral wall of the tubular member from an outer periphery to an inner periphery of the tubular member.

7. (Original) An optical fiber holder comprising a tubular member for fitting over an optical fiber bundle comprising a bundle of plural optical fibers to prevent the optical fibers from separating from each other, wherein: the tubular member has an inner periphery comprising a holding portion having a diameter capable of holding the optical fiber bundle relatively tightly, and a larger-diameter portion located closer to a leading edge of the optical fiber bundle than the holding portion and having a larger diameter than the holding portion; and the larger-diameter portion is shaped such that planes tangential to respective of predetermined two points on the larger-diameter portion contain respective opposite components that are symmetric with respect to an axis along which the optical fiber bundle extends through the tubular member.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of holding an optical fiber bundle, comprising the steps of: inserting the optical fiber bundle comprising a bundle of plural optical fibers through a tubular member having an aperture extending through a peripheral wall thereof from an outer periphery to an outer periphery of the tubular member; injecting a predetermined amount of adhesive into the optical fiber bundle through the aperture to fix and hold the optical fibers ~~relatively~~ tightly.

9. (Previously Presented) An optical fiber bundle holder comprising:

a connector unit having a bore extending there through;

a tubular member of a dimension to be received within the connector unit bore, the tubular member has a conduit for receiving an optical fiber bundle;

a pressing member for exerting a compressive force on the optical fiber bundle, the tubular member having an opening communicating with the bore for accommodating a contact of the pressing member with the optical fiber bundle; and

a member for securing the tubular member within the connector unit wherein the pressing member exerts a compressive force traverse to a longitudinal direction of the optical fiber bundle for restraining relative movement of the optical fiber bundle.

10. (Previously Presented) The optical fiber bundle holder of Claim 9 wherein the pressing member is a resilient band member.

11. (Previously Presented) The optical fiber bundle holder of Claim 9 wherein the pressing member includes a semi-cylindrical member and setscrew extending through the connector unit for applying pressure on the semi-cylindrical member.

12. (New) An optical fiber holder assembly comprising:

a connector body having a first bore extending therethrough;

a tubular member having a second bore extending therethrough, the tubular member has an opening transverse to an axis of the second bore and extending through to the second bore;

a first fastener on the connector body for engaging a first optical fiber bundle mounted in the first bore;

a second fastener on the connector body for engaging the tubular member whereby a communicating alignment can be held between the first optical fiber bundle mounted in the first bore and a second optical fiber bundle mounted in the tubular member; and

holding means inserted within the transverse opening for holding the second optical fiber bundle relative to the tubular member.

13. (New) The optical fiber holder assembly of Claim 12 wherein the first bore is larger than an outer circumference of the tubular member.

14. (New) The optical fiber holder assembly of Claim 13 wherein the holding means is a fluid adhesive.

15. (New) The optical fiber holder assembly of Claim 13 wherein the holding means is a flexible elastic band that is dimensioned to be in a state of tension when encircling the tubular member and extending within the transverse opening to press the second optical fiber against an interior of a portion of the second bore.

16. (New) The optical fiber holder assembly of Claim 12 wherein an entrance opening of the tubular second bore is surrounded by a beveled surface on the tubular member.

17. (New) The optical fiber holder assembly of Claim 12 wherein the tubular member is bifurcated with a front tubular part and a rear tubular part.